

# **Episode One Hundred Forty-Eight - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 04 - True Opinions And False Opinions About Epicurus**

**Post by "Kalosyni" of November 14, 2022 at 7:38 PM**

Notes from first half of podcast:

Continuing with true opinions and false opinions -- presenting these issues so that newer readers can be aware of them and understand how they fit into the big picture

1:54 -- Epicurus' views on truth

DeWitt said that it was a true opinion that he exalted nature as the norm of truth - and that this was a revolt against Plato who considered reason the norm, reason to have a divine existence of its own.

Epicurus taught that nature and the use of sensations, feelings, and anticipations are the standard for determining what we believe to be true.

False opinion to say that Epicurus was an empiricist in the modern sense -- he did not declare that sensation was the only source, and also be careful about the different meanings that the word "truth" can have.

3:00 -- commentary about the method by which Epicurus determined what was true vs what he thought was false.

This brings us to types of reasoning, deductive vs inductive reasoning -- DeWitt says that Epicurus taught chiefly by deduction adopting the procedures of Euclid, and parting company with both Plato and the Ionian scientists.

The false opinion was that Epicurus was a strict empiricist

3:58 -- What is inductive reasoning vs deductive reasoning

Inductive: Inference of a generalized conclusion from particular instances -- moves from observations to a generalization -- example: we see that from dogs around us that they have four legs so we deduce that all dogs have four legs (over-generalize -- there are some dogs that only have 3 legs) But we have to live with the knowledge that we have not observed every instance of dogs in the world (you've got a problem if you say I don't believe it unless I've seen it). Once you've seen a certain number then you decide based on probability percentage -- 95

percent sure it is correct. (9:00)

9:50 -- Epicurus talked about multiple causations, waiting when you don't have enough information, he would have acknowledged the limitations of inductive reasoning

10:10 -- Deductive reasoning: the deriving of a conclusion by reasoning in which the conclusion about particulars follows from general or universal premises -- moves from a theory then deduce by logic what is not directly obvious -- it depends on the truth of the premises, and so not really more powerful than induction because these premises have been developed through induction

11:00 -- an interplay of induction and deduction

Plato - knowledge of absolutes through reasoning -- to be sure of something, ideal forms -- he hides inductive reasoning through geometry

12:25 -- Epicurus -- the need to rely on the senses -- he believes that nature gave us only the senses, the feelings, and anticipations for determining the truth

Plato -- believed we had to go beyond the senses, and to some extent reject what the senses were telling us

13:15 -- the problem of universals -- qualities or relations found in two or more entities -- for example: if cup holders are considered circular, then circularity may be considered a universal property of cup holders -- human beings can talk and think about universals but philosophers disagreed if universals exist in reality beyond mere thought and speech

14:25 -- Epicurus - universals are in our thoughts only

Categorization goes on in human mind, these categories aren't generated universally - does the color yellow exist on its own separate from things that are yellow, does yellow exist in the abstract apart from the things that are yellow - Martin says "No".

16:12 -- Mammals, platypus

19:00 -- Theory - an explanation for phenomenon which has taken account for all the known facts, and unknown facts

--the ability to account and assimilate new information, adjust your theory in relation to all the evidence.

22:55 -- based on probability and the need to make decisions, does that lead you to become a total skeptic.

Epicurus was not a skeptic -- he repeats in Letter to Pythocles -- "nothing in phenomena is

against it". Magnetism, not possible to have an adequate understanding at that time. But for a tornado or lightning, he would say that nothing in phenomena is against it.

25:45 -- Dogmas are open to revision.

dogmatic=axiomatic. Realist as opposed to skeptical (but doesn't answer the questions). You still have to take positions on what is real and how do you determine what is real -- consistently reporting to us from the faculties which nature gave us.

27:20 -- Martin's take is that modern science is not after the truth in the way that ancient philosophers were

28:55 -- Joshua via Indiana Jones movie - Philosophy is looking for truth and science is looking for facts (my paraphrase)

31:50 -- Philosophical conversations which science can't answer, such questions as: is there life beyond the grave, does a supernatural god exist, questions like that are particularly province of philosophy and religion. If you are going to make a claim, the claim is unfalsifiable and cannot be tested.

And if you hold yourself to the standard that the only thing you are totally confident in is something which you observe for yourself, you've reached the end of your ability to reason -- we don't accept that there is any evidence from anyone who has come back from being dead and by definition understand that once were dead we don't come back from it. So in terms of being certain what happens after you die, if we take the position that we haven't experienced it for ourselves so therefore we're not sure, we've reached a dilemma in our reasoning -- Epicurus was taking the position that if you stop at that point, saying I don't know, you are always going to have doubt in your mind that will cause you to live less happily than you otherwise would.

33:15 -- Is it legitimate to speculate about things